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AT THE *1666 day*  
THE

# Record of God

A N D  
DUTY of FAITH

Therein required.

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A *Shadow*  
S E R M O N

On I JOHN V. ver. 11, 12.

BEFORE

*The Synod of Fife*

At St. Andrew's April 27th, 1719.



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The Right Reverend,

**The Moderator**

A N D T H E

Reverend and Worthy

**The Ministers and Elders**

O F

*The Synod of Fife,*

This S E R M O N published at  
their Desire is humbly offered by,

J A. H A D O W.



The Right Reverend,  
The Moderator  
AND THE  
Reverend and Worshipful  
The Ministers and Elders  
of  
The Synod of Life.

This SERMON published at  
their desire is humbly offered by

J. A. HADLOW.



# *The Record of God and Duty of FAITH, &c.*

1 JOHN V. 11, 12.

*And this is the Record, that God hath given to  
us eternal Life: And this Life is in his Son.  
He that hath the Son, hath Life: And he that  
hath not the Son of God, hath not Life.*



**M**INISTERS of the Gospel  
are in Scripture called *Watch-  
men, Stewards, Ambassadors.*  
These honourable Titles im-  
port a Trust committed unto  
them, which requires Dili-  
gence, and Faithfulness in  
the discharge of it. And  
the Things they are entrusted with are very  
precious and valuable; such as, the immortal  
Souls of Men, whereof they are Watchmen,  
*Heb. xiii. 17.* The Mysteries of God whereof  
they

they are Stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. and particularly, the Word of Reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 19. It is on account of this Word of Reconciliation committed unto them, that they are called Ambassadors for Christ *Vers. 20.* And it is the Part of Ambassadors to keep by their Instructions. Ministers the Ambassadors of God, ought to be well assured, that what they deliver in his Name, is agreeable to his Mind: They should not vent their own Notions for Gospel and Divine Oracles. For the Gospel is the Truth of God, the Doctrine of Salvation, which Ministers are to Preach, and People to believe and obey, as the Word and Record of God; a short Summ whereof is contained in the Passage we have chosen on this Occasion: *And this is the Record, &c.*

In these Words we may take notice of three Things.

I. There is a brief Account of the Way of the Recovery and Salvation of lost Sinners, *That God hath given to us, eternal Life: And this Life in his Son. And he that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life.*

II. There is the special Quality and Respect in which it is declared and proposed unto us, *viz. as Truth which God himself bears Witness unto: And this is the Record.*

III. There is implied our Duty with Respect thereunto, *viz. Believing.* For if this be a Truth unto which God himself gives Evidence

dence and Testimony, then ought we to believe and receive it as such. And it is also clear from the Context, where believing this Record is commended as a Duty, *Vers. 9.* and the not believing it, is condemned as most injurious to God, in making him a Liar, *Vers. 10.*

These are the three Heads, that we propose at this time, through the Lord's Assistance, to discourse of: And they are Matters of that high Importance, that both Ministers and People ought diligently and reverently to enquire into them; that they may be acquainted with them.

The first contains these Truths concerning God in Christ, which are the Object of justifying and saving Faith.

The second respects the Ground and Reason of this Faith, the Record of God. And the third respects our Duty, *viz.* believing: On which Head, we shall enquire into these Actions of this Faith, whereby we get an Interest in Christ and eternal Life through him.

HEAD I. The first Head is expressed in these Words, *That God hath given to us eternal Life, &c.* wherein we have three Branches, that deserve our serious Consideration.

1. The Spring and Fountain of the Recovery and Salvation of lost Sinners, God the Father giving eternal Life unto them. 2. The great Means through whom God of his Love and free Grace doth communicate and convey eternal Life, this is his Son Jesus Christ the Media-



for *And this Life is in his Son; not in the first Adam.*

*The Way on our Part, whereby we are made Partakers of this eternal Life freely given through Christ the Son; and that is by an Interest in Christ the Son. He that hath the Son hath Life: And he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life.*

Time doth not allow to enlarge upon these Things, which comprehend the Marrow of the Gospel, and Mystery of Salvation. And therefore we shall only consider the Import of the Words, wherein they are expressed by the divinely inspired Apostle.

**BRANCH I.** *God hath given to us eternal Life.* Here (1.) the great Benefite, *eternal Life.* (2.) The Granter and Bestower of it, *God.* (3.) The way of conveyance, by *Gift, given.* (4.) The Persons to whom it is given, indefinitely *to us.*

As to the import of the Phrase, when it is said, that God hath given to us eternal Life, it implieth,

(1.) That Man by the entry of Sin is destitute of eternal Life, and all Claim to it. *For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God, Rom. iii. 23.* all have failed of attaining the Glory of eternal Life, which God promised in the first Covenant, and are in a most miserable Estate, dead in Trespasses and Sins, and Children of Wrath by Nature, *Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3.*

(2.) That



(2.) That as our Recovery from this miserable Condition, and the bringing us into eternal Happiness, is from God alone; so he is not moved thereto from the Consideration of any good Thing in us, but of his own Love and Mercy he gives eternal Life. It is his free Gift. All Love begins on his Part, and not on ours, 1 *Joh.* iv. 8, 9, 10. and *Titus* iii. 4, 5. *After that the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour toward Man, appeared, not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us. That all might be to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, Eph.* i. 6.

(3.) These Words, *God hath given eternal Life*, in the past Time, as they import a Purpose in God of saving lost Sinners; so they hold forth the certainty of the Accomplishment thereof; that eternal Life shall be surely and actually conferred upon all those unto whom God hath designed it. So *Rom.* viii. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, ——— them also he glorified: i. e. will surely glorify.*

(4.) As these Words contain a Declaration of the immutable Counsel of God concerning the Salvation of Sinners and eternal Life; so God may be said to give it, (1.) By Promise: Of the heavenly Inheritance it is said, *Gal.* iii. 18. *God gave it to Abraham by Promise.* So 1 *Joh.* ii. 25. *And this is the Promise that he hath promised us even eternal Life.* (2.) By an Act of Grace, when he gives them a Right unto it in Justifica-

tion and Adoption. For in Justification God adjudgeth eternal Life unto Believers, or gives them a Right unto it, *Rom. v. 17, 18.* They that receive abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life. And by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift comes upon all Men unto Justification of Life. And by Adoption Believers are made Heirs, *Rom. viii. 17.* And if Children then Heirs. And they are conjoined, *Tir. iii. 7.* That being justified by his Grace, we shall be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life. (3.) By bringing the Heirs of Promise into the Possession of eternal Life, which Life is begun in Grace here, and perfected in Glory hereafter, *Joh. xi. 26.* Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die, *Col. iii. 3, 4.* Your Life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory.

(5) To us, importeth, that this Gift of eternal Life is not given to all and every one of fallen Mankind: For all are not brought into the Possession of it, neither have all a Right to it by Justification and Adoption, neither is the absolute Promise which is declarative of the eternal Purpose of God, made unto all: For tho it be sometimes proposed indefinitely, yet it is to be understood as made unto God's Elect, whom he hath given unto the Son, and who shall come unto him, *Joh. vi. 37.* and to Christ's Sheep, of whom he saith, *Joh. x. 27, 28.* I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall

*shall never perish.* And as to the conditional Promise; *He that believeth shall be saved,* it is made to Believers only, exclusively of others. And so the Apostle shews in the following 12th Vers. *He that hath not the Son, hath not Life.*

(6.) This Phrase, *God hath given, &c.* imports also that God hath likewise of his condescending Love and Grace, provided and given all Means requisite for rendering this his Gift effectual. Thus he hath given his Gospel and Ministers to publish it; his Calls, Exhortations, Commands, Promises, Threatnings, and all Gospel Ordinances to be Means of conveying it. And particularly he hath given the great Means, the blessed Mediator, his only begotten Son, that he might purchase this Life to Sinners by his Obedience unto the Death, and effectually apply it by his Spirit of Grace, *Joh. iii. 16. Rom. viii. 32. 1 Joh. iv. 9, 10.* which is the greatest Pledge of his Love and Grace, *Rom. v. 8.* And this leads us to

BRANCH II. *And this Life is in his Son*  
 εν τω υιω αυτου, *in or by his Son.* It is laid up in Christ the Mediator, and put into his Hand, with all Stores of Grace requisite thereunto, *Col. i. 19. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. He is full of Grace and Truth, Joh. i. 14.* And this Life is so in the Son, that by and through him it may be conveyed and made effectual to lost Sinners, *Joh. i. 16. Of his Fulness we all receive. Joh. xvii. 2. Thou hast given him Power over all Flesh, that he might*



*give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him.*  
 It is in the Son, and so it is better secured than  
 when entrusted to the first *Adam*. So this  
 Phrase imports, that God the Father hath  
 appointed his Son to be the Saviour of the  
 World, 1 *Joh. iv. 14.* and this Life is in him  
 as its Author. Hence he is called ἀρχηγός τῆς  
 ζωῆς, *Act. iii. 15.* The Prince (or Author) of  
 Life. And ἀρχηγός τῆς σωτηρίας, *Heb. ii. 10.* The  
 Captain of Salvation, as our Version hath it. And  
 αὐτίος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου, *Heb. v. 9.* The Author of eternal  
 Salvation. And he is so both by Purchase and ef-  
 fectual Application. (1.) He, by his Blood, pur-  
 chaseth the Pardon of Sin, and Deliverance  
 from Wrath, *Eph. i. 7.* and by his Obedience  
 he purchaseth eternal Life, and a Right to it,  
*Rom. v. 19.* By the Obedience of one shall many be  
 made righteous. And he purchaseth all Grace  
 whereby his People are made meet for the Pos-  
 session of this Life, even the Grace of Faith it  
 self, *Phil. i. 29.* For unto you it is given in behalf  
 of Christ, not only to believe on him, &c. (2.) He  
 effectually applies and gives out his purchased  
 Salvation unto all for whom he hath procured  
 it, *Joh. x. 27, 28.* My Sheep hear my Voice, and  
 I give unto them eternal Life: This he doth  
 by his Intercession, *Heb. vii. 25.* and by sending  
 his Spirit to convince and renew them, and  
 prepare them for the purchased Glory, *Joh. xvi.*  
*13, 14.* Howbeit when the Spirit of Truth is come,  
 he will guide you into all Truth: He shall glorify  
 me; for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto  
 you.



you. The Spirit worketh Faith in them, and thereby uniteth them to Christ, whereby they come to have Interest in him, and in all his rich Purchase. And this brings us to,

BRANCH III. *He that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life.* To have the Son, is to be united to him, and have Interest in him as Mediator. To have eternal Life, is to have an Interest in it and a Right unto it. And the having of Life is inferred from the having of the Son, and that exclusively of others that have him not. So that,

The Words import 1. That there is an inseparable connection betwixt an Interest in Christ, and a Right unto eternal Life.

2. That tho' God of his Love and Grace doth freely give to Sinners this Life, yet he hath committed the dispensing of all Grace and Glory unto Christ the Mediator: So that he hath appointed an Interest in Christ his Son, to be the Way of Sinners attaining unto eternal Life.

3. That this is the only Way exclusive of all others; for *he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life. Vide Acts iv. 12.*

That which is required of us in order to our having the Son, or our Union with and Interest in him is Faith, as is evident from *Joh. iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life, &c.* of which afterwards.

Now these Truths containing a summ of the Gospel, are proposed unto us as the Record of God; and this is what we formerly mentioned as,

HEAD

**H E A D II.** *This is the Record; i. e.* This is the Truth recorded. In the Original it is *μαρτυρία*, which ver. 9. is rendered, *the Witness of God*, and 1 Cor. ii. 1. there is an alike Word *μαρτυρία* and there it is translated, *the Testimony of God*. So that these Things are Truths, which God who cannot lie, bears Witness of, and gives Testimony unto.

The Words import that the Gospel is a Doctrine, which proceeds from God; who is Truth it self, and sovereign Lord of the Souls and Consciences of Men: And so it bears upon it the Stamp of his Veracity and Authority.

Hence 1. The divine Doctrine concerning the Salvation of Sinners can be known only by divine Revelation. Wherefore I see no ground for asserting, that Men, from the Light of Nature, and Works of Creation and Providence, may know that there is a remedy provided. For God's Design to give eternal Life, and his providing a remedy unto fallen Mankind, do not necessarily flow from his Nature; but are sovereign Acts of his free Love and Grace: And cannot be discovered, but by his own testimony and record concerning them.

2. If Gospel Truth be the Record of God, then ought we to receive it as such. The Veracity and Authority of God bring us under Obligation to receive it. And we ought to receive it with that Faith, which contains an acknowledging of his Veracity and Authority. *John iii. 33. He that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his*

Seal that God is true. Here is an acknowledging of the divine Veracity. 1 John iii. 23. And this is his Commandment, that we should believe, &c. Here, in believing there must be an owning the divine Authority. And therefore whatever other Knowledge Men may have of sacred Truths, if their Assent unto them be not upon divine Testimony, if it want this Owning of the divine Veracity and Authority, it is not that Faith which God requires in the Gospel.

3. The Ground and Reason of that Faith, by which we are required to Assent unto revealed Truths, is and ought to be the Veracity and Authority of God bearing witness unto them. And therefore divine Faith should not be resolved into the Authority of Men, or into the Principle of human Reason, or evident Propositions naturally revealed; but into the Authority of the divine Record evidencing its own Original. Hence the *Thessalonians* are commended, 1 *Thess.* ii. 13.

HEAD III. The Duty which this Record of God calleth us unto, is the receiving it as such, the receiving it, not as the Word of Men, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God, 1 *Thess.* ii. 13. And this is *Believing*. The not believing it, excludes Sinners from this eternal Life, and leaves them under the Wrath of God, *John* iii. 36. Seeing therefore the believing this Record of God, concerning eternal Life in his Son, is the Duty required of us, in order unto our Justification and Salvation; we shall here enquire what



what this Believing is, or what are these Acts of Faith, which give us an Interest in the Son and eternal Life through Him? And,

1. In this Faith there is an Assent of the Mind unto the Truth of this Record of God. We are bound by its divine Authority to receive it as Truth. And this Assent is so necessary that without it, there can be no justifying, saving Faith. *For he that believeth not God, hath made him a Liar, because he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son..* 1 John v. 10.

Some maintain that this bare Assent is all that belongs to justifying Faith. *Socinians* will have this Act of Faith, with our own personal Obedience comprehended in it, to be that Righteousness upon account whereof we are justified before God. *Arminians* hold that this Assent as it is an Act of Obedience and contains a Purpose of further Obedience, is graciously accepted of God for our justification, in place of that perfect Obedience required in the Law. Some modern Divines run much the same Way; Dr. *Whitby* in his Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament, and particularly in his Preface unto the Epistle to the *Galatians*, contends that “Faith in the Matter of Justification, is only a cordial and firm Belief, or a full Assent to, or firm perswasion of Mind concerning the Truth of what is testified of our Lord Jesus Christ, viz. That he is the true Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour of the World.” And whereas our Confession of Faith, Chap. xiv. §. 2. asserts, *That the principal*  
*Acts*



*Acts of saving Faith are, accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ alone for Justification;* he rejects this as a false and unscriptural Description of Faith. And indeed according to the Drs. Principles, he cannot admit of these Acts into the Notion of Faith. For (1.) His Opinion is, that Justification in the Sense of the Apostle *Paul*, importeth only the Remission of Sins past, under the old Covenant; and not God's accepting us as Righteous in his Sight, or adjudging Life eternal unto us. (2.) That Faith alone without a Course of sincere Obedience included in it, is the Condition of this Justification, and that the Assent of Faith, or the Act of Believing is imputed to us for Righteousness; And so Faith justifies as it is our Act, and not as it receives Christ and his Righteousness. (3.) That a Right to eternal Life must be obtained by our own personal sincere Obedience and Perseverance as the Conditions of the New Covenant. And (4.) That there is no Imputation of the Righteousness or active Obedience of Christ unto us in our Justification before God. And so having excluded the Obedience of Christ from our Justification, and his Righteousness from being the Ground of our Acceptance with God and of our obtaining a Right unto eternal Life: He finds no Place for such actings of Faith as *accepting, receiving and resting on Christ alone for Justification.* This Scheme is subversive of the received Doctrine of the reformed Churches, and I hope is not taught by any in the communion of this Church. I shall

therefore only endeavour briefly to vindicate our Confession of Faith in this Matter. Wherefore

2. Besides this Assent of the Mind unto the Truth of the Record of God, *the principal Acts of saving Faith, are, accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ alone for Justification, Sanctification and eternal Life.* For clearing and confirming this, consider,

(1.) This Record; wherein (as we explained it before) there is the Record or Testimony, and the Thing recorded or testified, which is, that Way which God in his Wisdom, Love and Grace, hath appointed for the Recovery and Salvation of lost Sinners, *viz. That God hath given eternal Life, &c.* Now in answer to this Record of God, the convinced sensible Sinner, not only gives his Assent unto the Truth of the Record it self, but also accounts the Way therein proposed to be good, suited unto the Glory of the Grace of God, and safe for him to venture upon, and the only Way he must betake himself unto, with a forsaking of all other Ways. And further in the exercise of Faith, he approves of this Way in his Heart, he is satisfied with it, and accordingly betakes himself to it. And thus there is in saving Faith, an accepting of that Way of eternal Life proposed in the Record of God. Moreover seeing God hath placed this Life in his Son as the Author and Purchaser of it by his Sufferings and Obedience unto the Death; and proposeth him, in this Way of Salvation, as the great Means of communicating and convey-

ing

ing his Gift of eternal Life unto perishing Sinners: The convinced Sinner destitute of all Righteousness of his own, must *accept, receive, and rest on* Christ the Son of God, as thus proposed unto him. *Lastly*, In this Way of Salvation, our having Life is appointed to be, by having the Son; now how can we have the Son, and an Interest in him as the Author of eternal Life; unless we heartily accept of this Way of Salvation, and receive him as thus proposed unto us? And if we receive him as an all-sufficient Saviour, we may also trust in him and rest upon him for Justification, and eternal Life, and all things requisite thereunto. And by believing on the Son, we have that Interest in him, unto which eternal Life is annexed, *John* iii. 36. So that believing on him importeth more than a bare Assent unto the Truth of his being the *Messiah*, however firm it may be. From all which we may see, that the Thing recorded, the Way of Salvation proposed as the Object of justifying and saving Faith, doth require and lead us unto these principal Acts of accepting and approving of that Way, and of receiving and resting on Christ and his Mediation for Justification and eternal Life. Consider,

(2.) The Descriptions given in holy Scripture, of justifying, saving Faith; which plainly import these Acts of accepting, receiving and resting on Christ for Justification and Life; as (1.) It is described and expressed by believing in Christ for Remission of Sins through his Name,



*Acts* x. 43. And by believing *on* him for Salvation, *Acts* xvii. 31. and in many other Places. Now this believing *in* and *on* Christ implies more than a firm Assent unto the Truth of his being the sent *Messiah* and Saviour of Sinners. For the Devils believe with this Faith of Assent. They believe that there is one God, *Jam.* ii. 19. And so believe the Things revealed of God concerning Christ, to be true. But the Faith whereby a Sinner is justified must have more in it than the Faith of Devils. God doth not give eternal Life unto Devils; nor propose the Way of their Recovery and Salvation through Jesus Christ, and therefore they are not called to believe on him. But Christ and the Way of Salvation through him is proposed unto Sinners of Mankind, for their Recovery and eternal Life; and therefore are they called to believe on him, by approving of this Way, closing with it, and betaking themselves to Christ, therein set forth unto them: And this plainly imports that *accepting, receiving, and resting on Christ* are the principal Acts of saving Faith, *1 Tim.* i. 15. *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners.* Not meerly this *Saying* it self is worthy of Acceptation, but the Thing contained and proposed in the *Saying*, viz. That Jesus Christ came to save Sinners. And therefore, Christ as come on this Design, must be accepted by Faith. (2.) Faith as justifying and saving is expressed by receiving Christ, *John* i. 12. *To as many as received*



received him, &c. so *Col. ii. 6.* By receiving the Attonement in his Blood, *Rom. v. 11.* By receiving abundance of Grace and of the Gift of Righteousness. *Rom. v. 17, 18, 19.* Christ being thus tendered in the Gospel for the Relief of perishing Sinners, that Act of Faith which answers to this Tender, must be a principal Act, and this is *Receiving*. And the wilful rejecting of him, and this Way of Salvation through him, even the not receiving him, is unbelief, *John i. 11.* and *v. 40.*

(3.) It is frequently expressed by trusting and staying upon the Lord, especially in the old Testament, *Job xiii. 15.* *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,* *Isa. l. 10.* — *Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* *Pf. ii. 12.* *Kiss the Son,* — *blessed are all they that put their Trust in him.* And surely this imports a receiving of Christ and resting on him, for these Blessings, for which he is proposed and tendered unto us.

The same is imported when Faith is expressed by looking, *Isa. xlv. 22.* and coming to Christ, *Matth. xi. 28.* *John vi. 35.* by flying for refuge and laying hold on the Hope set before us, *Heb. vi. 18.* and embracing the Promises, *Heb. xi. 13.* And these might be further insisted on; but what hath been said may evince, that the Compilers of our Confession have given no false and unscriptural Description of saving Faith, when they affirm, that its principal Acts are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for Justification, Sanctification, and eternal Life.

3. There is another Act which is commonly called the Faith of *Assurance*, whereby a Believer is perswaded of his particular Interest in Christ and his Mediation, that his Sins are pardoned for Christ's Sake, and that he hath Interest in eternal Life and shall certainly be saved through Christ. And there is ground for this in the Record of God, which we have explained: For herein it is said, *He that hath the Son hath Life*. Now it is supposed, that a Believer may know that *he hath the Son*, and that he hath truly believed on Christ, and therefore may conclude and be perswaded, that eternal Life belongeth unto him: For this is a Part of the Record of God, that *he that hath the Son, hath Life*, and *he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life*, John iii. 36. This is confirmed from the 13 ver. the Words immediatly following our Text, where the *Apostle* intimates his Scope in writing this Epistle, *these Things* (sayeth he) *have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life*. This Knowledge then and Perswasion is attainable, and it the Duty of a Believer to endeavour it, and seek after it; Yea, I shall say further, that this Faith of Assurance is necessary, not only unto the Believers Comfort, but also for the right performing of several Duties he is called to in the Course of new Obedience according to the Gospel. This we maintain against *Papists*, *Socinians*, *Arminians*, and all the *Pelagian* Brood; who from their preconceived Prin-

Principles concerning the Power of Free-will, and the final Apostacy of the Saints, do deny that Believers ought to make particular Application of the promises of Forgiveness and eternal Life, to assure their own Interest therein.

But it may be enquired, if this be an essential Act of justifying Faith, which Sinners are immediately called unto, upon the first Proposal of the Gospel and Record of God unto them?

We answer, That it is indeed a Fruit and Consequent of justifying Faith; but we deny that it is absolutely necessary and essential thereto. We dare not exclude all from a saving Interest in Christ, who have not yet attained unto a full Assurance of their own Pardon and Salvation. For the Scripture shews us that there may be some *who fear the Lord and obey the Voice of his Servant; and yet walk in Darkness and have no Light*: Who mean while are exhorted to *trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God*, Isa. l. 10.

Some seem to have been of another Mind, and particularly Mr. *Mayhal* on Sanctification, and the Author of *the Marrow of Modern Divinity*. Perhaps it may not be well taken, that I have mentioned this last Book: But seeing some have been at so much Pains, by Word and Print, to recommend and defend it, I may use the like Liberty to take notice of what I judge to be amiss in it. *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* is blamed, (and I think justly) for defining Faith in Terms which import Assurance: In Vindication of it, in



in a late Pamphlet it is answered, 1st. That Mr. Marshal upon *Sanctification* demonstrates very clearly and fully, that somewhat of Assurance is an essential ingredient of Faith. Here is a plain Approbation of Mr. Marshal in that Opinion. But I must own I think his Demonstration neither clear nor full. I shall make only one Remark upon it: He maintains page 178. That the Thing we are bound by the Command of God to believe, (*viz. that God freely giveth Christ and Salvation to us particularly*) is not a Truth before we believe it. This, in my Opinion, is an Imputation upon the Honour and Purity of God, as if by his Authority he obliged his Creature to believe what is not true before it be believed. It is also a Reflection upon the Record of God, as if its Truth did not depend upon his own Veracity and Faithfulness, but upon a Man's giving Credit to it, or perswading himself of it: For I suppose that what a Man is commanded to believe is the Record of God. The 2d Answer is, That, *the Marrow doth not make Assurance essential to Faith.* And this is a Denial of the Charge laid against it. Wherefore to clear this Matter, I shall 1. Shew the Opinion taught by this Author from his own Words. 2. I shall point out what I think unsound and blameable therein. And 3. I shall offer some Grounds why this his Doctrine ought not to be received.

1. In this Book, called *the Marrow of Modern Divinity* (page 118, 119. of the *Edinburgh Edition*) *Evangelista*, or the Gospel Minister is brought

brought in explaining the Nature and Terms of the Covenant of Grace, in opposition to the Law or Covenant of Works, viz. *That in the Covenant of Grace there is not any Condition or Law to be performed on Man's Part by himself; no, there is no more for him to do, but only to know and believe that Christ hath done all for him.* Then turning his Speech unto Neophytus, he saith, *here ye are to work nothing, here ye are to do nothing, here ye are to render nothing unto God, but only to receive the Treasure, which is Jesus Christ, and apprehend him in your Heart by Faith.* — Again, *nothing cometh betwixt but Faith only, apprehending Christ in the Promise.* — Wherefore as Paul and Silas said to the Jailor, so say I unto you, *Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved.* Then he gives his Goss on these Words of the Apostle, *Believe, &c.* *That is* (saith he) *be verily persuaded in your Heart, that Jesus Christ is yours, and that you shall have Life and Salvation by him, that whatsoever Christ did for the Redemption of Mankind, he did it for you.* And in the Foot of the Page there is marked upon this, *A Definition of Faith.*

— Here it is plain, (1.) That this Author speaks of that Faith, whereby a Sinner hath Interest in Christ, and is entered into the Covenant of Grace: That Faith which a convinced Sinner such as the Jailor was, is directly and immediately called unto by the Gospel: That Faith, which the awakened Sinner is exhorted to, in Answer to that weighty Question, *What shall I*

D

do

*do to be saved?* And that Faith, which hath  
 Salvation annexed to it. And therefore it is  
 justifying saving Faith it self, that he treats of,  
 and not any Fruit or Consequent of it. (2.) All  
 the Acts that he ascribes to Faith, such as re-  
 ceiving Christ, apprehending him in the Heart  
 by Faith, knowing and believing; he explains  
 to be a Sinners persuading himself of his particu-  
 lar Interest in Christ, and his purchased Salva-  
 tion. For in giving the Sense and Meaning of  
 this Gospel-Call, *Believe, &c.* he says, *that is,*  
*be verily persuaded, &c.* (3.) He makes the  
 Object of justifying Faith, proposed to a Sinner  
 in the Gospel, to be, *Jesus Christ is yours, you*  
*shall be saved by him, whatsoever Christ did for*  
*the Redemption of Mankind, he did it for you.*  
 And he makes the Act of saving Faith, as an-  
 swering unto the Object proposed, to be, a  
 firm Persuasion thereof. *Believe, &c.* that is,  
 be verily persuaded. (4.) For a Foundation of  
 this Faith or firm Persuasion, he supposeth some  
 kind of universal Redemption, and thereupon a  
 Gift and Promise of eternal Life to Mankind;  
 and that every one under the Gospel Dispensa-  
 tion, is called to make Application of this to him-  
 self in particular; and verily to persuade himself  
 that whatsoever Christ did for the Redemption  
 of Mankind, was done for him, and that the Gift  
 of eternal Life belongs to him in particular. *don't*  
 This will be more evident, if we shall con-  
 sider what follows in the same Book. *Neophy-*  
*tus, or the young Christian,* puts the Question,  
 Hath



Hath such a one as I any Warrant to believe in Christ? (that is, as above, to persuade my self that Jesus Christ is mine, &c.) Evangelista answers, That God in Christ, of his free Love to Mankind lost; hath made a Deed of Gift and Grant unto them all: that whosoever of them all shall believe in this his Son (that is according to the above Definition, shall be verily persuaded in his Heart, that Jesus Christ is his, that whatsoever Christ did for the Redemption of Mankind, was done for him, and that he shall have Life and Salvation by Christ) shall not perish, but have eternal Life. And for Proof of this he cites our Lord's Words to his Disciples, Mark xvi. 15. Go ye into all the World and preach the Gospel to every Creature. On which he gives this Comment, That is (says he) go and tell every Man, without Exception, that here is good News for him, Christ is dead for him, and if he will take him and accept his Righteousness, (i. e. if he will be persuaded that Christ is his) he shall have him. Therefore (saith a godly Writer) for as much as the holy Scripture speaketh to all in general, none of him ought to distrust himself; but believe that it doth belong particularly to himself. Now, how can Ministers of the Gospel tell every Man, as the Church of God, that Christ is dead for him, without the Supposition of an universal Redemption? This then is in his Opinion the general Warrant; and the particular Application thereof is made, by a Sinners believing or being persuaded that it doth belong particular-

ly to himself: And he illustrates this by a Simile of an earthly King giving a general Pardon to all his rebellious Subjects, even so (saith he) hath God, for the Obedience and Desert of Jesus Christ, pardoned all our Sins. And so in his Opinion justifying Faith must be a Man's Persuasion that God for Christ's Sake hath pardoned all his Sins.

2. Having thus shewed the Sentiments of this Author from his own Words, I come next to shew what I conceive to be unsound and blamable therein. And (1.) I think him faulty in making Assurance to be essential to saving Faith; yea in making the very *Essence* and *formal Nature* of justifying saving Faith, to be a Man's persuading and assuring himself of his particular Interest in Christ and the Benefites of the new Covenant. (2.) I think him culpable in maintaining that very Man, upon the first Proposal of the Gospel, is by its Call and Command, bound to believe directly and immediately that Christ is his, that his Sins are pardoned, and that he hath Right to eternal Life by him. (3.) I think it unsound to build this upon the Foundation of an universal Redemption, and Gift or Promise of eternal Life made unto all Men, or to assert that Ministers of the Gospel have Warrant from the Record of God, to tell every one of their Hearers that Christ is dead for him. For divine Truth is the Object of Faith; and the God of Truth never commands any Man to believe a Lie.

3. I come now to offer some Grounds why this Doctrine ought not to be entertained. And I think it disagreeable both to the Word of God, and to our Confession of Faith. And to evince its Inconsistency with Scripture, I offer these Considerations.

(1.) Justifying Faith doth not consist in an Assurance of our Interest in Christ and eternal Life, nor is this Assurance essential unto it: Because the Apostle in the Words of our Text, inferreth an Interest in eternal Life from an Interest in the Son: *He that hath the Son, hath Life.* Wherefore he that hath Assurance of his Interest in eternal Life must first know that he hath an Interest in the Son, and he gets this Interest in the Son by believing on him: And therefore saving Faith which unites to Christ, and gives Interest in him, must be prior to an Assurance of eternal Life. And *v. 23. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal Life.* Here, their Assurance or knowing that they have eternal Life, doth presuppose their believing on the Son of God, and therefore is a Consequent of this Faith, and not the *Essence* of it. Yea, the Apostle plainly supposeth that they may be Believers, tho' they have not yet attained unto the Knowledge of their having eternal Life: And therefore throughout this Epistle he gives many Marks whereby they might come to know that they were true Believers and born of God.

(2.) A



(2.) A Persuasion that we shall have Life and Salvation by Christ, if it be true, implieth a like Persuasion that we are pardoned, justified and adopted through Christ. Now Assurance must follow after an Interest in these Benefites; for a Man must be pardoned, before he can be verily persuaded that he is so, unless he presume and deceive himself: But justifying Faith goes before these Benefites in order of Nature, and therefore must be prior unto, and distinct from the true Assurance of them. Faith goeth before Pardon, which is promised upon believing, *Act. x. 43. To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his Name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive Remission of Sins.* Justifying Faith is also prior to Justification, *Gal. ii. 16. — We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ.* When the Spirit beareth Witness with our Spirit that we are the Children of God, *Rom. viii. 16.* it is supposed that we are truly Children; for the Spirit of God doth not give Witness to an untruth. But we are Children of God by Faith in Jesus Christ, *Gal. iii. 26. Joh. i. 12.* Therefore justifying Faith is before Adoption, and consequently Assurance of our Sonship is not essential to this Faith.

(3.) The principal and saving Acts of justifying Faith have their Object revealed in the Gospel, which is the Record of God, concerning the Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ. But the Object of this Assurance is not revealed in

the

the Gospel; this or that Man's particular Interest in Christ, is not there recorded; it is no where testified in Scripture that *Thomas, James, or John* have Remission of Sins, and a Right to the Gift of eternal Life. And Mr. *Marshall* himself acknowledges, *Pag. 178.* that we have no absolute Promise or Declaration in Scripture, that God certainly will, or doth give Christ and his Salvation to any one of us in particular. Therefore this Assurance is none of the principal and saving Acts of justifying Faith.

(4.) The essential Acts of saving Faith are required of all, that hear the Gospel, by that Call and Command that hath Salvation annexed to it, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved:* And every one to whom the Record of God concerning the Way of Salvation through Jesus is proposed, becomes thereby bound, with a direct Act of Faith to believe and betake himself unto this Way of Salvation for his Relief. But the Act of Assurance is not required of every one that hears the Gospel; neither is every Man, to whom the Way of Salvation is proposed, thereby bound directly to believe that Christ is his, that he hath Remission of Sins, and that eternal Life belongs to him in particular. For this is not true of every one of the Hearers of the Gospel. There being many who have not the Son of God, nor eternal Life through him. Wherefore this Assurance is not essential to

that

that Faith, which is required in the Gospel-Command, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

(5.) This Doctrine is not to be admitted, because of many Absurdities and Evils, that would follow upon it. As (1.) That Ministers would be thereby engaged to tell their Hearers, that Christ is dead for every one of them without Exception, which would be a going beyond their Commission. (2.) This Doctrine leads to an universal Redemption; nor can the Defenders of it ever satisfyingly answer the *Arminian* Argument, *viz.* What every one is bound to believe, that is true: But every one (at least of those to whom the Gospel is sent) is bound to believe that Christ died for him, therefore &c. (3.) This Doctrine tends to a more gross Universalism, *viz.* That God by absolute Promise hath given eternal Life to all who live under the Gospel. For without a Supposition of this, Ministers could have no pretext to say to every one of their Hearers, *Be verily persuaded in your Heart, that Christ is yours, and that you shall have Life and Salvation by him,* and this you are required to do by that Command, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.* (4.) This Doctrine, which thus calls Men to believe Things that are not true, hath a tendency towards that false Position, *That the God of Truth may by his Authority oblige Men to believe an untruth.* (5.) It tends to the Discouragement of such, who may be true Believers; but through Temptations, or Desertions,



ns, cannot attain unto an Assurance of their particular Interest in Christ, and his Salvation. For such Persons by this Doctrine, must conclude against themselves, that because they want this Assurance therefore they have no saving Faith at all. (6.) It tends to the encouraging of Self-deceiving Hypocrites, in the Conceit they entertain, that all is well with them, when really it is not so. For when they hear from this Doctrine, that Believing is a man's persuading himself that Christ is his, and that he shall have Life and Salvation by him; when they hear that every one is bound to persuade himself, they will readily conclude from the good Opinion they find they have of themselves, that they are true Believers, and thereby be further hardened in their Preconception.

Lastly, This Doctrine is not to be received in this Church, because it is inconsistent with what we profess in our approved Confession of Faith. For Chap. xiv. § 2. The principal Acts of saving Faith are said to be, *Accepting, receiving, and resting on Christ alone for Justification, Sanctification, and eternal Life.* And § 3. *that this Faith in many grows up to the attainment of a full Assurance through Christ.* Where this Assurance is plainly made a Fruit and Consequent of saving Faith, and not an essential part. And Chap. xviii. § 3. *This infallible Assurance doth not so belong to the Essence of Faith, that a true Believer may wait long, and*  
E *conflict*

conflict with many Difficulties before he be partake  
of it. And therefore, according to our Con-  
fession, a Man may be a true Believer, and  
yet want this Assurance. Wherefore I think  
that Ministers of this Church ought to make no  
Question, whether they should receive this  
Doctrine of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, or  
retain the Doctrine of our excellent Confession,  
which they have signed with their Hands as the  
Confession of their Faith, and have solemnly en-  
gaged to maintain and defend.

If I have insisted too long upon this Subject,  
let a due Concern, which we ought all to en-  
tertain, for the Truth of the divine Record,  
and for the Purity of Doctrine and Peace of this  
Church, be an Excuse for the Prolixness of this  
Discourse. And that I may not farther en-  
croach upon the Time and Patience of the  
Synod, I shall pass a large Field of practical  
Observations, that might be insisted upon  
from this Passage of holy Write.

May the Father of Spirits, by his holy  
Spirit, give us Faith, savingly to believe the  
Record concerning his Son Jesus Christ; and  
that believing on the Name of the Son of God,  
we may come to know that we have eternal  
Life; and give Glory unto the Father, Son,  
and holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Isaiah 55:1. Whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely. And Christ said, I am the Life, and he that believeth in me shall never die. John 1:9. The Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.

## APPENDIX.

**A**S our Confession of Faith denies Assurance to be of the Essence of saving Faith; so it no less disowns all *Universalism*, whether with Respect to the Decree of Election, or the undertaking of the Son as Surety, or his Purchase, or the absolute Promises of saving Grace. All these it restricts to a certain Number of Mankind appointed unto eternal Life. Confession *Chap. iii. § 6.* As God hath appointed the Elect unto Glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free Purpose of his Will, fore-ordained all Means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in *Adam*, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto Faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due Season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his Power through Faith unto Salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, sanctified, and saved, but the Elect only.

*Chap. vii. § 3.* In the Covenant of Grace, God freely offereth to Sinners Life and Salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them Faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto Life, his holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.



*Chap. viii. § 1.* Unto Christ the Mediator God did from all Eternity give a People to be his Seed, and to be by him in Time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. § 5. The Lord Jesus — hath fully satisfied the Justice of his Father, and purchased not only Reconciliation, but an everlasting Inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him. § 8. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased Redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, — effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey. *Chap. x. § 1.* All whom God hath predestinated unto Life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted Time, effectually to call. *Chap. xi. § 4.* God from all Eternity did decree to justify all the Elect, and Christ did in the fulness of Time, die for their Sins, and rise again for their Justification; nevertheless they are not justified until the holy Spirit doth in due Time actually apply Christ unto them. *Chap. xv. § 3.* Repentance — is of such Necessity to all Sinners, that none can expect Pardon without it.

How the following *Affertions* can be evinced to be consistent with this Doctrine of our Confession, I acknowledge is above my Comprehension. They may Essay it who maintain them, viz. That,

“ Jesus Christ in the Covenant of Redemption stood as Surety, not for the Elect  
“ only,

only, but for fallen Mankind, for the whole lost World: He engaged in their Place to satisfy Justice for them, and thereupon they are absolved from all their Sins, and therefore are virtually and really justified from Eternity, in Christ.

“ According to this Undertaking, the Son of God by his Death, did take away the Sins of the World, and procured their Discharge, which is Pardon purchased; and also purchased for them all the Grace and Benefits of the New Covenant. He is bound to save all, he came to save all Sinners, tho’ he doth not save all.

“ Christ the Saviour and Salvation, by him are freely purchased, freely offered, freely given: No Condition here at all, no Condition of Christs coming to save Sinners, no Condition of this Offer.

“ God by his Promises declares the Right of Sinners unto this free Gift, yea gives an absolute Right to all that hear the Gospel.

“ So that they have all a Right to Christ and all his Benefits, by absolute Promise and Disposition; and confirmed by the Seal of the Sacraments. This is a proclaimed, intimated, published Right, a sure Right, having no Nullity in it; a free, absolute, constant, and universal Right to all that hear it, even to the unregenerate and unbelieving. For the Lord stands engaged to perform all;

30 so that there wants nothing to your Title  
 35 but your receiving it. God gives absolute  
 40 Promises, but he addeth this, unless ye be-  
 45 lieve ye shall not be established.  
 50 Yet even this Condition it self is promised  
 55 the absolute Promises of giving the new  
 60 Heart, Life, Light and Faith, are made to  
 65 Sinners as Sinners. For the Lord requireth  
 70 nothing of Men, but what he hath first pro-  
 75 mised to fulfil, do, and work in them. Ne-  
 80 vertheless, Unbelief may stop the Execution  
 85 of an absolute and peremptory Promise; by  
 90 which means, the Lord may in Justice, make  
 95 Men know the Breach of his Promise.  
 100 God conveys the Benefits of the new  
 105 Covenant by way of absolute Promises to as-  
 110 sure us of the Certainty of the Things pro-  
 115 mised. They give Right and Claim ab-  
 120 solutely, but the Fruits of them (the  
 125 Things promised) are given upon Condition  
 130 of Faith. The Promise in it self, in as far  
 135 as it conferreth the Right, is absolute:  
 140 But as to the Event, it is conditional, and  
 145 without believing, it shall not be fulfilled.  
 150 The Lord's absolute Promises declare the  
 155 Sinners Claim and Title, but not what he  
 160 will do; tho' he hath taken the Work on  
 165 himself, and said; *a new Heart will I give*  
 170 *you.* The absolute Promises give Right unto  
 175 all, in Respect of external legal Destination;  
 180 but they are only to the Children of the Pro-  
 185 phets, or *heavenly seed* as it is said.



mile, in Respect of divine Intention, intending it for their Good.

"Faith justifies only declaratively, by letting a Sinner see what he is in Christ Jesus, and what in Respect of the Gospel, which declares to him Remission of Sins. And therefore every Sinner is really and actually pardoned and justified before the Gospel-Promise be declared unto him, and before he believe it, &c.

When the Patrons of this Scheme shall be pleased to explain more fully their Meaning, and attempt its Reconciliation, either with the Revelation and Attributes of God, or with the Confession of Faith signed by all Ministers of this Church, or even with it self; what they shall advance may be considered.

Page 25. l. 17. for Goss r. Gloss. p. 28. l. 19. for very r. every.

F I N I S,





